

HMS Weekly Update

26 November 2020

Dear Parent/ Carer

Update on life in school

As we approach the end of another week, we have lots to update you on. Life in school continues to be busy and vibrant with lots of opportunities for our pupils. Today's update contains information about upcoming events, all of which will be accompanied with specific details as the time approaches. It has been a joy to feel a real sense of community once again these past few weeks and the receipt of positive, thankful messages has been very much appreciated by all in school. The approach to the Christmas break is always a busy one and this year is no exception. Thank you all for your continued support of school life.

Festive dates

I mentioned last week that our team are working hard to ensure that our pupils have safe, memorable Christmas experiences despite the ongoing restrictions. Any Christmas celebrations we have will be conducted safely and in our year group bubbles. Below are some of the planned events so far – more information will be sent home later in the term and further events will be added.



We are delighted to be sharing our first (and hopefully last) '**Virtual Carol Service**'. This is usually one of our favourite nights of the year when our pupils, staff and families come together at Hexham Abbey for our annual service. Mr Holdsworth is working exceptionally hard whilst adhering to strict safety guidelines to prepare a pre-recorded event which we know will be just as magical! We will share more details on the launch closer to the time.

Date	Event	For who
Monday 30 November (onwards)	Advent Assemblies	All years
Thursday 10 December	Christmas Lunch	All years
Wednesday 16 December	Virtual Carol Service	All years
Thursday 17 December	Class Christingles	All years
Friday 18 December	Celebration Assemblies	All years
Friday 18 December	Christmas Jumper Day	All years

The only thing that pupils will need to bring into school for the Christingle activity is a medium-sized orange and a hand full of either dried fruit or small confectionery which will be placed on the end of four cocktail sticks. All other resources to make the Christingle will be provided by school.

The Christingle activity and Christmas Jumper Day are in aid of two charities: The Children's Society and Save the Children; we will set up an online donation page on School Gateway. Please note that this donation is optional for all families.

PTA Christmas Gifts



Things are a little different this year...we can't do our usual PTA Pop-Up Shop but we still wanted to give all pupils the opportunity to buy a small gift for a friend or family member, whilst also helping to raise funds for the school. As we are unable to ask for gift donations this year, we have put together a small selection of new gifts for all pupils to choose from, at a cost of £2 per gift. Next week, pupils will see photographs of the gifts made up so that they can make their orders.

Please enclose £2 per gift with your order and hand in form & money in a sealed envelope to your child's form teacher (cash or cheque made payable to Hexham Middle School PTA)

If your child is absent, you can email their order to hmsptachair@gmail.com and we will arrange how to collect payment. Please include your child's **Name, Class and the Gift Code**.

Your child's gift order will be given to them in class from week commencing 14th December. If they are not in school that week then we will get their gift to them before the end of term.

Order forms will be sent home with pupils and also sent to parents electronically. Orders must be placed before 3pm on Monday 7th December. Thank you for all of your support!

Pastoral update

The Pastoral Team have sent home their second [newsletter](#) focused on mental health and well-being. This includes tips, strategies and support information which could be useful for your child. There are particularly useful links for children to stay connected and active and helpful links for parents. Please do keep in touch with school – we are always here to support in any way we can.

'Be You' Peer Mentoring

At HMS, the mental well-being of our pupils is of utmost importance and some of our year 8 pupils are about to begin training as part of the 'Be You' peer mentoring programme. The sessions will be delivered by a Peer Mentor from the 'Be You' mental health project. The pupils will undertake eight weeks of training which will include: learning what a peer mentor role involves, understanding safeguarding procedures within schools, identifying personal skills and qualities, how to communicate effectively and will work together to develop a peer mentoring programme to be delivered in school.



Once the pupils have completed their training, they will mentor younger pupils in school. The group will decide how they will progress with this; ideas include a buddy system and a lunch time support group. The peer mentors will support other pupils and be a listening ear - being able to offer support

moving forward. Two members of staff will also undertake training which will allow them to deliver the programme to pupils in future years.

House Point Totals

Pupils continue to respond extremely well to our updated approach to rewarding positive behaviour. Below are this week’s House Point totals as well as the **‘Top 4’ pupils in each year group this week.** Well done to each and every one of you – the totals are increasing rapidly!

House Totals		Year 5		Year 6		Year 7		Year 8	
AIn	10,865	1	Thomas T	1	Lucy C	1	CJ B-P	1	TJ R
Coquet	10,452	2	Gabriel B	2	Bradley C	2	Callum H	2	David D
Tweed	10,359	3	Christian T	3	Robin B-M	3	Poppy F	3	Corey N
Wansbeck	9,950	4	Jack M	4	Callum R	4	Kade M	4	Eve C

Key Stage 2: ‘Stars of the week’

This week’s theme was **resilience and positivity.** Well done to all of the pupils below.



Year 5		Year 6	
FHA	Evie W	MDO	Kenzie W
JNI	Georgie R	CPR	Aimee S
FHI	Michael B-P	RAL	Abby A
EKI	David T	JJO	Vanessa S

A focus on... Languages

This week’s curriculum focus is from Mr Armstrong. Today’s parent update also includes information on our Christmas Card Design Competition – please encourage your child to get involved.



Here at Hexham Middle School we believe that every pupil is entitled to learn a language. We want to empower our pupils and help motivate the next generation of linguists. Learning a new language is not only fun and interesting, but it can also help support pupils’ knowledge and understanding of English.

A quick review of the term so far...

Year 5 - This term, pupils have been getting to grips with learning a new language (or continuing their studies) and we have been very impressed with their excellent attitude and enthusiasm. Pupils have learnt greetings, numbers, colours, months and birthdays. Well done Year 5: keep it up!

Year 6 - Pupils have been enjoying learning to talk about their family members and describing others. In recent lessons, pupils have had great fun designing their own criminals and creating wanted posters in French!

Year 7 - Pupils have been learning how to give opinions on schools subjects, tell the time in French and talk about their timetable and school day. Pupils have also enjoyed learning about the similarities and differences between UK and French schools.

Year 8 – Pupils have been learning how to talk about their free time and what they like to watch on the TV. They can do this using both the present and near future tense. Pupils have recently enjoyed completing a bubble writing task to bring all of their learning together!



Mr Armstrong and the other French teachers have been really impressed with our pupils’ resilience and determination to learn and succeed in their French lessons.

How to support your child’s learning	How to practise vocabulary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask your child about what they have been learning about in their French lessons. • Ask your child to teach you a word/phrase in French every day. • Visit the Hexham Middle School website where you can find out more about what your child will be learning in lessons. • Test your child on their fortnightly spellings (KS3). All spellings are uploaded onto class charts for your information. • Encourage your child to watch a TV show or film with subtitles in another language. • As a family, learn a new language together. • Watch the weather/news in French with your child. What can you understand? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create flash cards with words and pictures on to help you remember key words. • Use post-it notes to help you remember key vocabulary. • Ask an adult or a friend to choose a topic and try to talk about it for 1 minute (in French). • Use ‘look, cover, write’ and check lists to practise spellings. • Create songs or rhymes to help you remember key vocabulary and grammar rules. • Try to spend 5-10 mins per day on an interactive learning app such as Duo Lingo.

Sports update



Over the next few weeks, we will be running three different inter-house competitions. We will be having ‘Run for Fun’, table tennis and badminton championships to crown winners in each year group who will earn P points for their house.

The ‘Run for Fun’ competition will be open to anyone who would like to enter and run our 2km course. The table tennis and badminton championships will be decided through qualification tournaments in PE lessons. We are setting a rule however that pupils cannot compete in both

championships to give more pupils an opportunity. We will be looking to offer more of our 'Active Hexham' tournaments in the spring term.

A huge thank you to all of our pupils for their efforts so far! The big question is... ***will anyone be able to beat their teacher in a game?***

Year 6 Art Workshops

Our year 6 pupils have had a fantastic week working with visiting artist, Sam Douglas, who joined lessons along with consultant, Susan Priestly from Visual Arts in Rural Communities (VARC), as part of the 'Entwined Project'.

HMS was lucky to have had some of the odds and ends of fine hand-rolled pastels from Unison colour donated to us. Each of our year 6 classes have been working on a large-scale mural inspired by the local landscape of Northumberland and townscape of Hexham.

Pupils were invited to contribute birds and animals to the composition and use a variety of colour and mark-making. Smudging 'blue' became a particular favourite activity. Pupils even got to take some pastels home to keep practicing their skills. Well done to Year 6 and we look forward to 6CPR meeting Sam and creating using their pastel skills on Friday!



Thank you to [Sam](#), Susan, [VARC](#), Unison Colour and [Arts Council England](#). Some useful links for more information are included here. A huge thank you to Miss Lawton for another amazing art experience!

Year 5 Parents' Evenings

Thank you for logging in and arranging your appointments for our upcoming Year 5 Parents' Evenings. If you have any issues, please call or email the admin team who will be happy to support. Please note: we have now **extended the Monday evening** to open appointments from 3.45 until 7.00 (this seems like the more popular evening).



Appointments can be made from Monday 23 November at 9am. To make appointments, please visit <https://hexhammiddle.schoolcloud.co.uk/> where you will be asked to enter your email address and child's details. If you have any questions or issues, please call the office who will be happy to help.



PTA Extraordinary General Meeting: we will be holding an Extraordinary General Meeting on the 21st January to adopt a new constitution. All are welcome: please email hmsptachair@gmail.com for the meeting details and/or to see a copy of the proposed constitution.

Reminders/ Dates

Bikeability (Level 2): Tuesday 1 – Friday 4 December

Year 5 Parents' Evenings: 7th and 9th December

Lots to share with you all – thank you for reading our weekly update. Have a great weekend everyone!

Yours faithfully

Mr Watters

Deputy Headteacher